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Sustainable development: implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

South Africa:* draft resolution

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 69/221 of 19 December 2014, as well as other resolutions relating to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,[1]

Recalling also that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development recognized the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation and, in view of this, for striving to achieve a land degradation-neutral world in the context of sustainable development,

Reaffirming its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", recognizing that it builds on the Millennium Development Goals and seeks to complete their unfinished business, and stressing the importance of the implementation of this new ambitious Agenda, which has poverty eradication at its core and aims at promoting the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development,

Recalling that Sustainable Development Goal 15.3 states that by 2030, the international community should combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world,

* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China.

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

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Noting that in striving to achieve Goal 15.3, it is also important to address wider elements of the 2030 Agenda, including ending poverty and hunger, tackling inequality, empowering women and stimulating economic growth,

Reaffirming its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it and helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions within the framework of a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development,

Noting in this regard that combating land degradation, desertification and drought, including through sustainable land management, can contribute to easing forced migration flows influenced by a number of factors, including economic, social, security and environmental concerns, which can, in turn, reduce the current and potential fighting over resources in degraded areas,

Acknowledging that striving to achieve land degradation neutrality would significantly contribute to the three dimensions of sustainable development through the rehabilitation, restoration, conservation and sustainable management of land resources, and that this could potentially involve the development of voluntary national targets,

Noting that desertification, land degradation, drought and climate change are closely related and that, if not addressed, they would pose a serious challenge to sustainable development for all countries, in particular developing countries,

Expressing its deep appreciation and gratitude to the Government of Turkey for hosting the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Ankara from 12 to 23 October 2015,

Concerned by the devastating consequences of extreme weather phenomena in arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid regions, characterized by recurrent and long spells of drought, flooding and increasing frequency and severity of dust-storms and sandstorms, and their negative impact on the environment and the economy,

Emphasizing the need to promote sustainable land management, sustainable forest management and the restoration of degraded lands in order to combat desertification, land degradation and drought,

Stressing the importance of inclusiveness within the United Nations development system and that observer States be taken into account in the implementation of the present resolution,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;[2]

2. *Welcomes* the outcomes of the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

3. *Encourages* developed countries party to the Convention to actively support the efforts of developing countries party to the Convention in promoting sustainable land management practices and in seeking to achieve land degradation

[2] A/70/230, sect. II.

neutrality by providing substantial financial resources, facilitated access to appropriate technology and other forms of support, including through capacity-building measures;

4. *Also encourages* developed country parties, and invites other countries in a position to do so, multilateral financial institutions, the private sector, civil society organizations and technical and financial institutions to:

(a) Provide scientific, technical and financial assistance to help affected countries party to the Convention requesting assistance to set and achieve voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and to implement sustainable land management practices and land degradation neutrality initiatives;

(b) Establish equitable partnerships that encourage responsible and sustainable investments and practices by the private sector, which contribute to achieving land degradation neutrality, which supports the health and productivity of the dry land and its people;

5. *Requests* the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and appropriate bodies of the Convention, within the scope of the Convention, to improve the effectiveness of collaboration with the secretariats of the other Rio conventions and other partners at the national and, as appropriate, subnational levels to support the implementation and monitoring and follow-up of voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and initiatives;

6. *Invites* the secretariat of the Convention, as the lead organization for desertification, land degradation and drought, to take the initiative and invite other relevant agencies and stakeholders such as United Nations agencies, international organizations, financial institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector, to seek cooperation to holistically achieve Sustainable Development Goal 15.3 and to work to address the relevant wider elements of the 2030 Agenda in an integrated manner;

7. *Reiterates* that degraded land, if recovered, would, inter alia, contribute to restoring natural resources, thus potentially improving food security and nutrition in the affected countries, and in the process could, inter alia, contribute to the absorption of carbon emissions;

8. *Decides* to include in the United Nations calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 2016-2017 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and its subsidiary bodies envisaged for the biennium, and requests the Secretary-General to make provisions for the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017;

9. *Calls upon* the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and resources, to include observer States in the implementation of the present resolution;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session a report on the implementation of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010-2020);

11. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-first session, under the item entitled "Sustainable development", the sub-item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa";

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.